

Washington, DC - Today, the United States House of Representatives passed the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act, a bill that properly equips our troops, requires Iraqis to take responsibility for their own country, helps fight the global war on terror, and establishes a responsible strategy for the redeployment of US troops. The benchmarks and timetables laid out in this legislation answer the pleas of the American people and refocus efforts to fight the war on al Qaeda in Afghanistan by providing an additional \$1.2 billion in funds to address this threat to our nation's security. In addition, the bill funds key domestic initiatives that the Bush Administration underfunded in recent years, including a provision that allocates \$3.1 billion to fully fund the Base Realignment and Closure recommendations for 2007.

Congressman Charles Gonzalez (TX-20) issued the following statement applauding the passage of the act in the United States House of Representatives:

"This bill provides a much needed drastic change to our country's Iraq policy, and symbolizes the beginning of the end of President Bush's open-ended commitment to his 'stay the course' Iraq policy. The passage of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Health and Iraq Accountability Act represents Congressional action that accomplishes what this Administration has failed to do over four years - provide a responsible timeline for redeployment of our troops out of harms way.

We can no longer sustain an open-ended Iraq policy that ignores the lessons of history, the views of our military leaders, and the will of the American people. The brave men and women of our military have accomplished all that has been asked of them, but the sectarian differences and the resulting violence in Iraq is an Iraqi problem that can only be solved politically and diplomatically by the Iraqi people.

The genuine support for our troops in this bill is represented by the responsible plan that brings our brave men and women out of harms way and away from the crossfire of a

bloody Iraqi civil war. Our country owes this much to our troops, and I am proud to have been part of the passage of this historic bill."

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